

HIGH SCHOOLS

Southfield stays perfect; Pioneer 1st to win four



JAMES L. VARON / The Detroit News

Chelsea Moon of Kalamazoo Central takes a peek over his shoulder as he crosses the line first in his team's heat of the 800 relay at the Class A meet.

By Tom Markowski
Of The News Staff

YPSILANTI — Crystal Braddock exceeded all her expectations. The junior sprinter won the 100 meter dash in record time, ran the anchor on the winning 400 relay and, a few hours later, won the 200 dash to lead Ann Arbor Pioneer to its fourth consecutive girls Class A track and field championship at Eastern Michigan University Saturday.

Pioneer is the first Class A team to win four consecutive titles, boys or girls.

Pioneer finished with 82 points and Detroit Cass Tech was second with 60. Southfield finished a perfect season by winning its first boys state title outdistancing Jackson 58-34.

"I DIDN'T expect to win let alone set a state record," Braddock said. "There's a lot of hot competition out there that competed last year."

Braddock had to defeat last year's champion, Patrice Verdun of Flint Central, who placed second Saturday. And she came from behind to do it.

"Having the state champion next to me scared me a lot," she said. "But I felt if there was someone that could push me, it was her."

"We've relied on spiritual faith and the faith in others," said Pioneer Coach Bryan Westfield. "We've lost kids this year who were better athletes than some of them out there today who couldn't live up to those standards."

CLASS A TRACK

BRADDOCK'S STATE-record time in the 100 was 11.70, surpassing the previous record of 11.94 jointly held by Vivien McKenzie of Detroit Chadsey (1982) and Paulette Bryant of Southgate Aquinas (1984). Braddock won the 200 in 24.45 seconds and, after starting the last leg of the 400 relay in seventh, she raced past the front-runners to give Pioneer the victory in 48.92.

"Crystal and I have been working together since junior high," said Westfield. "She was just a gangling kid who worked hard. She wasn't the best athlete then but she was the one who worked the hardest."

Braddock said she has received letters from just about all the Big Ten schools but added she will consider UCLA as well.

"I'm very proud of our team," she said. "I idolized all the athletes who have come through Mr. Westfield's program. I'm proud of my contribution to this championship team."

"**FAITH, DEDICATION** and commitment — giving your all — is what our team and school is made of."

Southfield Coach Tom Eschmann couldn't be sure the last time Southfield won a state title but he wasn't surprised his team ended the drought.

"I believe the last won was golf in 1965, but

that's just a guess," he said. "I'm not surprised we won. I don't say that arrogantly. We had everyone run well. The trick is to make it look easy. That makes our season perfect. We won every dual meet, every invitational. Everything we competed in we won."

Junior Jeff Reynolds won the 200 in 21.63 and was on the winning 800 and 400 relay teams. In his fourth event, the 1,600 relay, Southfield finished second to Detroit Cooley.

"IT FEELS pretty good," he said after winning the 200. "I'm just trying to warm down for the 4x400. It's tough but the training we get from Coach Eschmann makes it easy. You can't be foolin' around before each race. You have to concentrate on each one."

State records were set in both the boys and girls 3,200 relay. Monroe's team of Derek Bork, Matt Schroeder, Chris Brown and Tim Pitcher ran 7:41.29, breaking Farmington's record of 7:48.50 set last year. The West Bloomfield team of Amira Danforth, Tracy Abbott, Maureen Reed and Stacy Abbott ran 9:17.46 to break Ann Arbor Huron's record of 9:20.40.

Karin Spiers of Rochester Adams won the 100 hurdles in 14.49. She came from behind to pass the favorite and last year's champion, Darchelle Ross of Cass Tech, and Ross' teammate Kenya Clemens.

"About halfway through the race is when I make my move," said Spiers.